**Missoula County Public Schools**

**Title I Standing Committee**

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

6:00 to 7:30 PM

Administration Building

215 South Sixth Street West, Room 24

**Committee Attendees:** Tara Barber, Brian Bessette, Heather Davis Schmidt, Lori Grant, Terry Jarvis, Sindie Kennedy, Kelly Kopitzke, Trevor Laboski, Tracy Ledyard, Wendy Melvin, Matt Quinlan, Erica Ramsey, Julie Robitaille, Joy Seymour and Shannan Sproull.  
  
**Public Attendees:** Karen Allen, Seena Demmons, Janet Hegedus and Lisa Hendrix.  
  
**Guiding Question:**  
How do we assure the MCPS Title I program best meets the needs of students and families?   
  
**Long term target:**  
Collaborate to make decisions by providing feedback on Title I programming and fiscal planning within Title I and district goals, and the *MCPS 21st Century Model of Education*.  
  
**Short term targets:**

* Review collective commitments for collaborative work
* Share feedback on the following:
  + Should the high schools use the feeder-school pattern formula or current calculation model?
  + Should we continue to prioritize highest poverty schools or all schools above district average?

**AGENDA**

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| Welcome, introductions, and review agenda |
| Review [collective commitments](https://www.dropbox.com/s/1nt5s79p7zdbuaz/Collective%20Agreements%20for%20Collaborative%20Work.docx) for collaborative work.  Heather reviewed the agenda and the Collective Agreement. |

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| Share feedback on:   * Should the high schools use the feeder-school pattern formula or current calculation model?   ***Work in small groups; use Hot and Not Protocol; chart responses; share out small group feedback/main points with large group.***  Before separating into small groups to work on the Hot and Not Protocol, Heather reviewed supporting documents that will aid in exploring the forthcoming Title I budget decisions. She started with the Five Year View of MCPS Free & Reduced Meals (F&R) percentages by school. In actual numbers, schools may not be that far apart but in terms of percentages, it can be very different (e.g., Lowell and Lewis & Clark). Heather pointed out changes over the past year particularly related to Franklin (they saw a dramatic reduction in F&R numbers). Lowell, Russell and Paxson saw an increase in F&R percentages. In considering the K-8 district average, Paxson is over the district average. Middle schools did not experience a lot of change. High schools have seen a change. Hellgate is below the district average. Seeley Swan saw a small decline, also.  Heather explained that high school percentages are dependent on F&R applications (for instance, Willard’s F&R average is 70% since all the students turn in an application). The federal government understands that high school students don't always complete the forms. Because of this, we could use the feeder pattern percentages.   Heather reviewed the MCPS Feeder Pattern Percentages document, explaining the percentages are based on the F&R rates at the schools that feed into the high schools. These numbers are not a perfect representation of the F&R rates at the high schools because MCPS offers open enrollment at high schools. This means, not all students attend their “neighborhood high school.”   Committee members referred to the Enrollment Counts by Area of Residence pie charts. One chart represents students that are “exported” from a high school and one chart represents students that are “imported” to a high school. When reviewing these charts, the committee recognized there is an unequal distribution of high school students throughout the district (for instance, Hellgate imports 38% of their students from another high school, whereas Big Sky imports 25% of their students from another high school). [**NOTE:** there was a question why Clinton School was listed on the pie chart as an out-of-district feeder school. Clinton was included on this list by mistake. It is counted as an in-district feeder school in the data.]  Members of the committee wondered if there is data that explains why students choose a different high school other than their own. Trevor explained he reviews this data. The percentages have been consistent for the past three years. The top three reasons at Hellgate is IB, music and siblings. At Big Sky, it is the health academy, special ed and siblings. Trevor is also looking at raw F&R numbers and percentages by grade level. He is seeing a pattern at Big Sky that suggests his F&R numbers will likely increase, based on the current Freshman percentage of 52% and the Sophomore percentage of 40% (compared to Hellgate which is 33% and 33%, respectively).  The committee then compared high school budget scenarios side-by-side to include the Feeder School Pattern and Free & Reduced Lunch scenarios (the F&R allocation pattern has been used for several years). Heather explained both budgets include an across-the-board cut of 6% and the sequestration reduction of 6.5%. She went through the budget, line-by-line, explaining the required set-asides and the per pupil allocation. She explained the district Title I department took the biggest cut.   When considering the F&R Lunch model, eligible schools are Seeley-Swan, Hellgate and Big Sky. Using this model, Hellgate is below the district average. The schools are listed as a ban of poverty. Using this model, Hellgate will experience a large decrease in their allocation, based on the per pupil amount and the number of students.  The purpose of Title I funding at the federal level is to impact the entire school. This is why it is based on percentages. The pot of money has to be divided.  Heather explained the Superintendent’s Cabinet will review the Hot and Not Protocol feedback from the Standing Committee and the Meeting of Practitioners. Members of the Cabinet will make the final decision. Those members include:   * Karen Allen, Alex Apostle, Melanie Charlson, Heather Davis Schmidt, Pat McHugh, Steve McHugh, Sheri Postma, Scott Reed and Mark Thane.   See below for a summary of the results from the Hot and Not Protocol. |
| Share feedback on:   * Should we continue to prioritize highest poverty schools or all schools above district average?   ***Work in small groups; use Hot and Not Protocol; chart responses; share out small group feedback/main points with large group***  Before working in small groups on the Hot and Not Protocol, members of the committee compared the two elementary budgets: One Without Paxson Elementary and one With Paxson Elementary. Currently, Paxson is not a Title I school. By including Paxson, the money gets spread out more to the schools and less to the district. Franklin’s F&R population decreased in February, actually changing their ban of poverty and decreasing their allocation significantly (regardless if Paxson is included or not). Lowell, Hawthorne and Porter saw an increase. Approximately all other buildings will receive approximately $1,200 decrease if including Paxson. Paxson has been above the average for the past two years. Wendy Melvin wondered if we could look at a 6-month average instead of using one month of F&R numbers. [**NOTE:** the state requires that districts choose one month out of the year to report F&R numbers. Using a 6-month average is not allowed.]  Julie wondered if we should consider geocodes for the elementary schools, considering overflow for kindergarten from university housing goes to Paxson. Students living in the Xs go to Paxson and students living in the new student housing go to Lewis & Clark.  See below for a summary of the results from the Hot and Not Protocol. |
| Reminder about *Annual Title I Meeting of Practitioners*   * Friday, March 22, 2013 * 8-11 AM * Business Building Boardroom |
| Public Comment: Janet Hegedus – She explained she has been with the Title I program since 1978. The goals have been to make sure Seeley is adequately funded. It is a small school and doesn't have resources that urban schools have. There have been times when Big Sky and Hellgate have teetered. Sentinel has complained year after year that they have a need. Title I is a program that is supposed to support the neediest schools. Janet gives Matt kudos for suggesting the feeder pattern formula. With this formula, Big Sky and Seeley would be below the district average. Seeley would be below Big Sky. This would imply that Big Sky and Seeley do not have a need. Janet is encouraged that we could fund all three schools. Hellgate could be grand-fathered in but would take a big hit. We could search for other funding opportunities.  Lisa Hendrix – She and Trevor will get together and look at out-of-area applications to analyze why students attend different schools. Lisa's perception is that students choose to attend Hellgate because of the diverse culture. As a middle school principal, it was often the low income students that couldn't make it at Hellgate because of the diverse culture. There is a visually noticeable difference when comparing the actual observed numbers of low income students with that of submitted applications. Lisa did some research and found that although many high schools still use the F&R allocation, the feeder school model is a more accurate depiction of poverty. With the feeder school model, Seeley and Big Sky will lose a total of $31,000 versus Hellgate’s $68,000 cut.  Karen Allen - Karen explained the feeder school model was used in the past to determine if a school could reach the district average. It was never used for competition between schools. She was particularly concerned about Franklin. There is more poverty there than anywhere else. |
| Closing and next steps:  Matt Quinlan shared an article he found that explains Free and Reduced Lunch applications are an inaccurate way to measure poverty. The number one recommendation is to use a more accurate indicator of poverty: The feeder school pattern. The feeder school pattern shows the most accurate picture of poverty in our district and it allows us to serve the most kids.  Tracy Ledyard is happy we are looking to find the best picture of poverty in Missoula. If we could spend more time, we could get an accurate picture of what is going on in our schools. She explained there are four ways to calculate poverty in schools: F&R Lunch application, feeder schools, census data and surveys. She suggested the F&R application is not an accurate depiction of poverty.  Joy Seymour suggested if we go with the feeder pattern, we want to make sure the kids don’t get lost. She doesn't want to see us stop trying to get students to apply for F&R Lunch. We want to identify those kids and make sure they are eating.  Erica Ramsey would like to see consistency. It should be the same, whatever we decide.  Trevor Laboski stressed no one is after another’s money. It is about serving the kids. Trevor's first priority is to obtain F&R Lunch applications. When he arrived at MCPS, he was told Title I allocations were determined by bands of poverty. The next year, we went to pure numbers. Now, Big Sky has a higher number and a higher percentage of F&R students. Trevor reported that 52% of freshman at Big Sky are F&R. In projecting to the future, that number will likely stay static through the grades. With the feeder program, Big Sky would lose services. Seeley is not happy about this because they could lose significant funding. Trevor wished we could spread the money more equally.  Tara Barba stressed that the pie charts are telling us that these are OUR kids at OUR schools. It is our money for our kids.  Julie Robitaille suggested if we look at a different model, we have to develop a better model for tracking kids. We cannot use a blanket model. We have the resources. We should be able to track students better. Seeley has a high poverty level. We need a more accurate projection so the money follows the kids. At Willard, the money does not follow them from their home school if they are eligible for Title I (as an intervention program, they receive different funding support).  Wendy Melvin asked if Franklin could be grandfathered based on bands of poverty. [**NOTE:** Franklin would have to lose Title I eligibility in order to be grandfathered. Since their F&R numbers exceed the district average, they will not lose Title I funding, therefore could not be grandfathered.] |
| **EXIT TICKET:** See below summary of responses. |
| ***NEXT MEETING:*** Fall 2013, specific dates TBD |

**HOT and NOT Protocol**

**High School Current Calculation**

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| **HOT** | **NOT** |
| **Standing Committee Feedback** | **Standing Committee Feedback** |
| * Identify the ones who filled out the forms. * Open enrollment will not impact this form as well. * Reflects our poverty percent more accurately. * Focus our decision-making on what’s best for our students. * The funds stay with the kids in poverty. * 1133 students total F&R more accurate representation of poverty than 830. * Based on real numbers. * Based on actual enrollment. | * Relies only on F&R forms turned in. * Not accurate measure of poverty in school. * Not equitable. * Don’t have to hound parents to complete the form. * Understood by DOE to be inaccurate. * Recommended by policy advisors to change to a more accurate indicator (Alliance for Excellent Education). * Hard to determine actual enrollment due to open enrollment. * Cannot use it with Seeley. * Hellgate will lose money. * Hard to get students to complete forms. |

**High School Feeder Pattern**

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| **HOT** | **NOT** |
| **Standing Committee Feedback** | **Standing Committee Feedback** |
| * Hellgate gets more money and retains program. * Paperwork is not an issue. | * BSHS/SSHS (two schools with highest F&R numbers) lose money. * SSHS – no other resources in Seeley for F&R students. * Latest numbers |

**K-8 NOT Including Paxson**

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| **HOT** | **NOT** |
| **Standing Committee Feedback** | **Standing Committee Feedback** |
| * $24,000 impact increase; approximately $1,000 loss to other schools. * Keep them off the roller coaster ride (have, don’t have, have . . .). * They won’t have to worry about adding and losing programs year to year. | * Approximately $1,000 taken away. Longevity of receiving funds/programs. * You should get funding if you follow the protocol and are over average percentage 2 years in a row. |

**K-8 Including Paxson**

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| **HOT** | **NOT** |
| **Standing Committee Feedback** | **Standing Committee Feedback** |
| * Serves Paxson F&R students. * Supporting generational poverty. * It’s been district policy. They have demonstrated they have the percentage 2 years in a row. | * Not consistent. i.e., what happens when/if it drops? * Half of student population qualifies for F&R. * Could attribute to different type of poverty (temporary). * Not enough funds to hire a full time staff. * Sustainable? |

**EXIT TICKET SUMMARY**

**NOTE:** 4 participants completed the Exit Ticket

1. Today’s essential question/issue is:
   1. Should high schools use the feeder-school pattern or continue with F&R lunch applications model? (N=3)
   2. Paxson or no Paxson?
   3. Should we prioritize highest poverty schools?
   4. What is the best way to fund schools?
2. Two things I learned today to address the essential question/issue:
   1. [I learned] what the percentages are and the impacts for each school.
   2. About 1/3 of high school students do not attend their boundary high school.
   3. If we use the feeder model we will need a better way to track students.
   4. [I learned about the] benefits to various schools.
   5. [I learned] how to read the data and use it.
   6. [I learned about] the amount of HS students who go to other schools.
3. One question I still have:
   1. What to do? What to do?
   2. Isn’t there another way to entice HS families to complete the F&R form and see the importance of funds? (Consider exploring another option like census data.)
   3. What about Franklin? Is there an option to use a 6-month average?
   4. Why can’t we lump all students in MCPS together and divvy up [funding] according to need (i.e., per kid not per school)? Then all eligible kids will receive support.